

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Speaking With One Voice: Army Relations with Congress

by

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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This SRP examines the relationship between Army leaders and Congress. It discusses organizational changes that will improve the Army's strategic communications effort. By formally incorporating its strategic communications efforts with Congressional liaison offices, the Army will not only speak with one voice on appropriations and authorization issues, but it will also provide a tool for senior Army leaders to remain on message during their interaction with the media, Congressional staffs and members of Congress.

This analysis focuses on possible causes of the Army's disjointed efforts to establish firm relations with Congress and proposes ways to bridge this shortfall. Concluding recommendations will provide the Army a means to better articulate Army transformation; it will also reduce knee-jerk reactions from the Army and Congress over misconceptions of Army issues and initiatives.

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PREFACE

The US Army competes for resources with other services, so it must effectively articulate Army programs to Congress in order to secure limited funding. In the past 15 years several studies have analyzed this issue and offered recommendations for improving Army efforts to build better relations with Congress. Some of these recommendations have led to constructive changes. However, the Army still needs closer coordination between the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison and Assistant Secretary of the Army, Budget Liaison Office (ASAFM-BUL). So much work remains on articulating a clear and consistent Army message to Congress and preparing Army leadership to convey that message.

By formally incorporating its strategic communications efforts within Congressional liaison offices, the Army will not only speak with one voice on appropriations and authorization issues, but it will also enable senior Army leaders to remain on message during their interaction with the Congressional staff and members of Congress.

This analysis focuses on causes of the Army's disjointed efforts to establish productive relations with Congress and proposes ways to bridge this shortfall. Concluding recommendations will provide the Army with a means to better articulate Army transformation and help reduce knee-jerk reactions from the Army and Congress over misconceptions of Army issues and initiatives.

SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE: ARMY RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS

The Chief of Staff of the Army became the objective of widespread negative publicity from the media and unnecessary scrutiny from Congress after his decision to change the Army's primary head gear to the black beret in October 1999. Surely the leader of the most powerful land force in the world should be able to make a minor decision on his service's head gear without an act of Congress.

This strategy research project (SRP) examines the Army's apparatus for conveying information to Congress and other stakeholders. It also examines how the Army formulates strategic decisions and how it develops and executes strategic communications plans related to these decisions. It then describes how successful corporations link their strategic vision to legislative affairs. Finally, it proposes changes in the Army's internal and external communications mechanisms to improve relations with key stakeholders.

CONGRESS' MANDATE

Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution declares, the Congress shall have the power "To provide for the common defense . . . To raise and support Armies . . . To provide and maintain a Navy . . . To make rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval forces. To declare war. And to make laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying out the foregoing powers."¹ To obtain information on service programs, Congress has established four (4) defense committees: House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the House and Senate Defense Appropriations sub-committees. All of these powerful committees frequently contact the service Legislative Liaison Offices. But the services tend to view these inquiries as a necessary intrusion rather than an opportunity to maintain a positive on-going relationship. The Army is seen as the most reluctant of the services.² Congressional staffers are often puzzled by the Army's reluctance to provide information critical to the success of high priority programs. The Army's reluctance then leads to frustration on the part of staffers and members of Congress.³

To highlight the level of formality the Army imposes on the system to provide information to Congress, the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison (OCLL) provides detailed instructions on managing Congressional inquiries. These rules cover a myriad of issues from who should respond to requests for information received from members of Congress to appropriate actions upon receipt of a congressional inquiry, to how the inquiry will be managed. Each major command normally acts as the forwarding agent for replies made by their subordinates.⁴

Congressional reporting is closely scrutinized. For example, information for Congress is forwarded to the Chief of Legislative Liaison (CLL) or to the appropriate Army agency for coordination, with a final reply to the Congressperson concerned when a direct reply is requested. Such replies require approval by DA when the request relates to proposed or pending legislation or congressional investigation, or when it requires an explanation of the Army's policy beyond the purview of the addressee. The DA lays out procedures for expediting inquiries when warranted.⁵

The Army generally attempts to provide individual members and Congressional committees with timely information on activities and approved plans of the Army. Particular emphasis is given to matters affecting committee responsibilities and individual constituencies. This unsolicited information may be in the form of briefings, written materials, or data especially compiled for the convenience of Congress.⁶

The DA informs members and interested Congressional committees about unclassified changes in missions or operating levels of Army installations that will have a significant impact on local constituencies. Members must be informed of all changes prior to public release or implementation to allow them the opportunity to address their constituents. Army installations include Government-owned contractor-operated (GOCO) facilities. Approved changes in local missions or operating levels are reported through channels to OCLL before public announcement or implementation. Contracting officers report impending contract awards of five million dollars or more to the DA, as required by Federal Acquisition Regulation.

Each significant Army action is reviewed for Congressional implications. As Army plans are developed that affect areas of concern to Congress, the responsible Army Staff agency coordinates with the OCLL to identify Congressional implications. A Congressional notification plan is included as part of the Army plan when necessary. The plan is then announced in news releases prepared by Office of the Chief of Public Affairs (OCPAs), information papers, and briefings for Congress; such announcements address specific interests.⁷

ARMY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CONGRESS

Army leaders are traditionally uncomfortable during visits with Congressional members and staffers. They view requests for information concerning Army programs as an attempt by Congressional members and staffers to find cuts in programs.⁸ When they fail to provide timely, accurate information, their reluctance becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Congressional staffers will harvest funds from programs that are important to the Army because they do not have updated information on these programs.

In September 2001, the House Armed Service Committee cut funds from the Army's international headquarters account for 2002 because it perceived the US as paying NATO bills rather than strictly funding a US headquarters element. In fact the account funded US headquarters supporting NATO, including US Army Europe. This misconception resulted from faulty information provided for fiscal year 2000 and 2001. By simply sending over an information paper clarifying the status of this account, the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for International Affairs fixed the problem for fiscal year 2003.⁹

COMMON INTERESTS

The US Army competes for funding with other services and must be able to effectively justify its programs to Congress, its ultimate resource provider, in order to successfully secure limited dollars. In the past 15 years, several studies have analyzed this issue and offered recommendations for improving Army relations with Congress.¹⁰ Although the Army adopted recommended changes in several areas including closer coordination between the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison and the Budget Liaison Office, much work remains to articulate a clear Army message to Congress and to prepare Army leadership to convey that message. Army leaders know they must tolerate Congressional intrusion into Army business, but they generally cooperate with reluctance. They make little effort to cultivate positive relationships with members and their staffs. When staffers call for additional information on programs, Army leaders view this as an intrusion rather than an opportunity to establish an ongoing relationship beneficial to the service.¹¹

While the Army has adopted changes in training general officers for their role in carrying the Army's message to the Hill, additional work is required to shape that message and incorporate it into a cohesive legislative strategy. By formally incorporating its strategic communications efforts with Congressional liaison offices, the Army will speak with one voice on appropriations and authorization issues. Further, a consistent Congressional communications strategy will enable senior Army leaders to remain on message during their interaction with Congressional staff and individual members of Congress.

This SRP focuses on the causes of the Army's disjointed efforts to establish firm relations with Congress and recommends ways to bridge this shortfall. Concluding recommendations will provide the Army with a means to better articulate Army transformation. They will also reduce the knee-jerk reactions to Congressional inquiries into Army issues.

While implementing a vision for an uncertain strategic environment over the past three years, the Army has initiated a transformation of its legacy force to a new force, more

strategically responsive and dominant across the spectrum of operations. This force will be built around capabilities, not potential threats. Recent events have clarified the strategic environment, have validated the Army's direction, and have provided impetus to accelerate development of these capabilities. The Army has been preparing to fight this first war of the 21st Century for the past two years. We need to move faster.¹²

In his review of service cultures, the late Carl Builder indicated that the Army has a culture based on service to the nation. He sees the Army as the most loyal of the services in carrying out mandates from its civilian leaders.¹³ The Army's commitment to the nation selflessly has created a kind of institutional humility. Army leaders may be at times reluctant in telling Congress what it really needs. Yet the Army's closeness to the public should provide fertile ground for establishing a lasting, effective relationship with Congress, which also represents the people, who are the Army's greatest resource.¹⁴

ARMY STAFF STRUCTURE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Two offices within the Army Staff are responsible for Congressional liaison: The Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison and the Budget Liaison office with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management. Duties and responsibilities of these offices are as follows: The Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison (OCLL) is directly responsible to the Secretary of the Army and responds to the Office of the Chief of Staff when required. OCLL is the sole directive agency for Department of the Army Congressional Affairs. The OCLL formulates, coordinates, and supervises policies and programs on the Army's relations with Congress. Further, it provides liaison between the Army and committees of Congress (except for Appropriations, Civil Works, and Printing). As the Department of the Army point of contact for members of Congress, their staffs, and all relevant committees, the OCLL advises on the status of Congressional affairs affecting the Army and on legislative aspects of Army policies, plans, and programs. An OCLL key function is to provide prompt, coordinated, consistent, and factual information in response to Congressional inquiries. OCLL also reports on legislative and investigative actions of interest to Army witnesses who are called to appear before legislative or investigative committees.¹⁵

The second office representing the Army to Congress is the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management Budget Liaison [ASA(FM-BUL)]. The ASA(FM-BUL) is responsible for liaison with the defense appropriations committees and their staffs, except in civil works programs and Army national cemetery matters. It tasks Army Staff agencies and major Army commands (MACOMs) to provide witnesses, briefers, and information requested by

the appropriations committees and their staffs. It also coordinates hearing schedules and witness lists with the OCLL.

The ASA(FM-BUL), working with the Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation (DPAE), Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (OCSA), reviews Army responses to congressional appropriation committees and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) (that involve resources) prior to submission of these responses. The Director of the Army Budget, in conjunction with DPAE, OCSA oversees appropriations committee matters and acts as the final reviewing authority for Congressional transcripts and inserts involving testimony by the Secretary and Under Secretary of the Army, Chief and Vice Chief of Staff, and the Sergeant Major of the Army.¹⁶

Finally ASA(FM-BUL) continuously coordinates with the OCLL on appropriations committee matters to ensure that Army responses to committee members and staffs are consistent with replies sent to other committees. It also coordinates, monitors, and reports the status of ongoing investigations by the Surveys and Investigations Staff, House Appropriations Committee.¹⁷

A third player, the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, also plays a key role in the Army's development of external messages. The Chief of Public Affairs is responsible for crafting the Army's story through the media and its internal message through the command information program.¹⁸

Although both the Chief of Public Affairs and the Chief of Legislative Liaison report directly to the Secretary of the Army, they work within the Executive office of the Secretary, which coordinates activity of the Secretary as well as the Chief of Staff, the Vice Chief of Staff and the Under Secretary of the Army. Despite this direct link to the office of the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army, no one formally integrates the Army's message on key issues. Perhaps this responsibility should reside with the office of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, but his myriad of duties do not allow him to focus exclusively on ensuring that the Army stays on message.¹⁹

Following the reorganization of the headquarters Army staff and secretariat in 2002, some suggest that the Director of the Army Staff should serve as the integrator, since the Director links the uniform staff with the civilian secretariat staff. This arrangement seems promising, but the director is not familiar with the art of crafting the Army's message. To ensure consistency in the effort, an individual seasoned in the business of public relations and legislative affairs should carry out the integrator function.

Major Army Commands (MACOMs) and Army Staff agencies also play a critical role in communicating with key Army stakeholders. MACOM commanders and Staff agency directors select qualified witnesses in coordination with the OCLL and the ASA(FM-BUL) to assure continuity of designated witnesses to testify on specific issues. They provide information in response to requests received from the OCLL, ASA(FM-BUL). They must ensure that all information given to Congressional committees or the CBO that affects resource programming is coordinated the OCLL and ASA(FM-BUL). They are also required to report any contacts with members of Congress, Congressional staffs, or committee staff.²⁰

FOCUS ON STAKE HOLDERS

Since the Army and the other services rely on Congress for funding, it must maintain an effective information flow to ensure the success of Army programs. Historically, members on the defense committees have shown a pro-military posture. However, support for specific programs is not guaranteed if the Army's objectives clash with members' goals for particular constituents.²¹

All politics are local. Former Texas Senator Phil Gramm gave a clear illustration of his focus when dealing with issues related to his constituents: "If we should vote next week on whether to begin producing cheese in a factory on the moon, I almost certainly would oppose it. On the other hand, if the Government decides to institute the policy, it would be my objective to see that a Texas contractor builds this celestial cheese plant, that the milk comes from Texas cows, and that the Earth distribution center is located in Texas."²²

Congressional constituencies in the defense industry reflect the current environment of the industry. Government employees maintain substantial influence within the Depot Caucus with the House of Representatives. Private industry associations and corporate offices in the Washington area represent private business interests on the Hill. Since all these constituencies represent particular narrow interests, appeasing one usually antagonizes the other.

Over the past ten years, the US has attempted to outsource as much wholesale logistics support as possible. Obviously, defense contractors, including Boeing and Lockheed Martin, have been fully supportive of these efforts since they will be the primary beneficiaries of these contracts. Government employee unions, however, have successfully maintained a strong defense against expanded outsourcing through the bipartisan Depot Caucus. Although the majority of the members of the House Armed Services do not belong to the caucus, it controls enough votes to impact DoD policy.²³

Rather than adapting a proactive approach and pushing its agenda on privatization and other issues, Army leadership has historically taken an indirect approach and developed its message to co-opt any opposition. So the Army leadership tends to wait until the final moment to notify members to prevent their acting to stifle their plans. This passive approach often fails because of information leaks and because some members attempt to stifle Army plans anyway.²⁴ A more effective approach would generate support by effectively packaging policy changes. Since there are winners and losers on almost every policy issue or spending program, the Army must expend maximum effort retaining sufficient supporters to ensure success in sustaining its critical programs.

TRAINING LEGISLATIVE LIAISON OFFICERS

The Army routinely receives low marks for failing to develop its legislative liaison officers. The typical officer serving in the Army's two legislative liaison offices retires as Lieutenant Colonel not selected for battalion commander. Compared to other services, fewer Army officers with a legislative liaison background are selected as to command battalions, which is the prerequisite for promotion above Lieutenant Colonel. Even fewer serve in the legislative liaison field for more than one assignment.²⁵ So the Army culture does not encourage developing a core group of officers who operate effectively in the legislative affairs arena. Obviously, working to ensure Army access to limited resources in order to sustain critical programs is not considered a critical competency for Army officers.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Over the past 20 years, the business environment became so complex that a reactive approach to addressing stakeholder concerns would not suffice.²⁶ The Army's operating environment is also complex and too interdependent on other services and other branches of government to neglect the strategic value of communications to sustain daily support of the long-term Army vision. The Army must promulgate a clear understanding of resources required to accomplish its vision in order to penetrate the often murky world of government bureaucracy. Centralized corporate communications support their strategic goal of developing and perpetuating a positive corporate image. Corporations transmit consistent and coherent messages through media, from face-to-face contact to print and video. Corporations also develop a central corporate communication capability to tap into the media on a routine basis as well as in emergency and crisis situations. Their communications with various publics, both local and global, are more consistent and effective, since they delivered with one clear voice.²⁷

Integrity is extremely valuable for any organization, and any organization's spokesperson should instill trust in the audience. Without such trust, their message is not likely to have the desired impact or much positive effect. Integrity and trust are built over time through attention to detail, consistency in message, and follow through on promises. They are reinforced in face-to-face contact with stake holders through body language and eye contact as well as through words.²⁸

LESSONS FOR THE ARMY FROM CORPORATE AMERICA

The American Management Association offers two models for Government Relations and Corporate Communications functions for corporations. The first model incorporates the government relations function within the corporation relations office. The second model establishes the government relations and corporate communications as separate equal entities at the corporate headquarters.²⁹

Others use a decentralized structure wherein government affairs and corporate communications personnel are assigned to operating groups. They focus on individual products and programs. The senior executive in charge of corporate communications reports directly to the chief executive officer (CEO), who sets the company's overall direction. The CEO's personality will ultimately determine the strength of the communication function.³⁰

In five major corporations, the legislative affairs function and the corporate communications function were split, similar to the Army's Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison and the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Two organizations effectively employ a single integrator in this process to successfully control their external message to the Hill.

Boeing Corporation, which is active in both the private and government sector, maintains a Washington office where the Vice Presidents for Legislative Affairs and Corporate Communications report directly to the Senior Vice-President for the Washington office. The Senior VP for the Washington office serves as the single integrator of the corporate message through daily office calls with these two (2) VPs. The Senior VP for the Washington Office also serves on the executive committee to ensure a continuous link to the corporate headquarters in Chicago, IL.³¹ Boeing also provides a representative from Legislative Affairs and Corporate Communications to integrated process teams for each of its weapons programs to ensure that any issue of Congressional or media interest gets prompt attention. These representatives also serve as a conduit for information for the corporate VPs to ensure a single message at the corporate level.

TRW uses a similar model with a Washington office manned by an Executive Vice President serving as the primary integrator of the company's corporate message to Congress and the various government agencies. TRW also includes a Vice President from its primary operating divisions (TRW Space and Electronics and TRW Systems), in its Washington operations to ensure continuous integration of the company's vision and to communicate that message its key stakeholders in Washington. Unlike Boeing, TRW conducts only a weekly meeting to coordinate key events occurring in its operating divisions with the Washington office. The Executive VP in charge of the Washington office is a member of TRW's executive committee to ensure the Washington office maintains the corporate headquarters focus.³²

THE ARMY'S MODEL FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Within the Department of the Army structure, the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs and the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison oversee internal and external communications. We have reviewed the role of the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison earlier, but the Army's public affairs function warrants further discussion. The Chief of Public Affairs formulates Army public affairs policies and advises the Secretary of the Army, and the Army Chief of Staff, and other senior Army and Department of Defense leaders on public affairs matters relating to the Army. The Chief is responsible for Army public affairs doctrine, training, leader development, organization, materiel and soldier issues and procedures as proponent for military and civilian public affairs professionals. He coordinates and advises the worldwide implementation of the public affairs security review program and is responsible for the Army's command information program. As Chief of Public Affairs, he has command supervision for the Army Broadcasting Service and its affiliate stations, Army Hometown News Center, the Army Public Affairs Center, the U. S. Army Field Band as well as OCPA's New York and Los Angeles offices.³³

An ad hoc relationship integrates the responsibilities of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army and the Director of Strategic Communications Initiatives to ensure synchronization of public affairs and legislative liaison efforts. These individuals meet weekly to coordinate long range issues important to the Army.³⁴

At the action officer level, tiger teams work specific strategic initiatives. They schedule meetings as required to coordinate specific actions. The tiger teams are much like integrated process teams in industry. Staff officers from the Chief's Strategic Communications Office lead the tiger teams and determine which office will take the lead role for expert information on issues. OCLL and Public Affairs (PA) are also represented on the tiger teams. The tiger teams

develop the Army's message and PA develops communications plans for the media, while OCLL develops a parallel plan for carrying the message to the Hill.³⁵

This process worked relatively well following the December 2001 reorganization announcement. OCLL identified key Congressional stake holders and prepared press and briefing packets for them to ensure the Army maintained a proactive program to stifle opposition to this change in the Army's headquarters structure. Although Senators Warner and Levin initially voiced skepticism about the Army's planned reorganization, the Army's proactive approach and efforts to address their concerns quickly diffused major opposition. Unfortunately, the Army has not always been so fortunate.³⁶

WHO SHOULD SERVE AS THE ARMY'S INTEGRATOR?

The Army has designated elements to execute both internal and external communications through media and legislative liaison activities. But does the Army, like successful corporate organizations, have a single individual responsible for ensuring that it communicates one message simultaneously to internal and external stakeholders? As the Boeing example illustrates, integration requires a continuous effort and does not occur by accident.

The Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Budget Liaison Office, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and the Director of the Army Staff - are any of these offices capable of performing the integration function? Are any of them fully empowered to execute the integration function?

Obviously, the Chief of Public Affairs focuses on communicating to internal stakeholders through command information programs and external stakeholders through the media. The Chief's office works with Army MACOM's to ensure coordination of the Army's messages and themes down to the installation level on a daily basis. PA officers participated in Tiger teams with the CSA's office of Strategic Communications to ensure a consistent message internally and externally.

Reporting directly to the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Public Affairs has access to key decisions made by the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, Under Secretary of the Army and the Vice Chief of Staff. However, what level of support does the Chief of Public Affairs require from other Army Staff principals to maintain consistency in the Army message? What level of input does he have in ensuring the Legislative Liaison fully supports the public affairs effort?

These questions reveal the inability of the Chief of Public Affairs to lead the effort in integrating the Army's message. PA plays a crucial role, but cannot act as the lead integrator

because of its inability to formally task other Army Staff principals or assistant secretaries. PA is not an Army Staff principal and thus does not possess the power to change communications of staff principals. PA remains a key element in the integration process, but is not suited for the single point mission.

The Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison also plays a key role in the integration process, but can it serve as the principal integrator of the Army's message to internal and external stakeholders? As with the Chief of Public Affairs, the Chief of Legislative Liaison reports directly to the Secretary of the Army and also supports the Chief of Staff, the Under Secretary of the Army and the Vice Chief of Staff. The Chief of Legislative Liaison serves as the single point of contact on the Army Staff for all communications with Congress including members on the four defense committees.

The Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison provides members to the Tiger teams formed by the CSA's office of Strategic Communications to work critical issues for the Army's future to ensure consideration is given to Congressional stakeholders. Given the Chief of Legislative Liaison's participation in weekly meetings with the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army concerning critical issues related to the Army's message to Congress, this individual obviously plays a critical role in the integration process.

Unfortunately, the Chief of Legislative Liaison also cannot serve as the single integrator for the Army's internal and external message. The Chief of Legislative Liaison does not play a role in the Army's command information program for its internal stakeholders. Although the Chief of Legislative Liaison works with MACOMs and local installations in their Congressional inquiry actions, the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison is not in a position to execute the integration function. Suffering from the same limitation as the Chief of Public Affairs, the Chief of Legislative Liaison is not a staff principal. Although he has tasking authority related to Congressional actions, he does not have the power to force action by staff principals to fall in line with desired programs.

The Office of Chief of Legislative Liaison does not have sufficient authority to require Army Staff principals and their civilian equivalents in the Secretariat to establish a routine of regular contacts with Members of Congress and key staffers. Those who are effective in establishing these relationships are successful because they enjoy relationships with key members. The Army has missed many opportunities because staff principals neglected these relationships. When I served in the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison from July 2001 until July 2002, I found that the primary Army Staff principal for my programs had not visited key members of readiness subcommittees in the House and Senate in over a year. While the individual was

very cooperative in initiating the effort when prompted, a single integrator would have ensured that every staff principal had a contact program in place.

Establishing working relationships with members of Congress and key staffers should not be viewed as an opportunity to lobby. Such relationships build credibility which is critical for defending Army programs from either misinformation or erroneous information. If the Army leadership develops effective relationships with members of Congress and key staffers, such misunderstandings can be handled by a phone call rather than a subject matter expert briefing, which requires additional time and resources.

The Vice Chief of Staff cannot effectively perform the integration function, but the Director of the Army Staff might prove effective. Under the December 2001 Headquarters Department of the Army Realignment, the Director of the Army Staff serves as the key coordinator of actions for both the uniformed Army Staff and the civilian Secretariat. Hence the Director serves in a key position to integrate the Army's internal and external messages. But does the Director of the Army Staff have the ability to serve as the integrator of the Army's message in addition to his myriad of other duties?

Both the Chief of Public Affairs and the Chief of Legislative Liaison work for the Secretary of the Army, since they also support the other members of the Executive Office of the Secretary. However, the Director of the Army Staff has the ability to insert himself into the information flow and the decision-making process related to internal and external communications. The Director also has the ability to task Army Staff principals as required to carry out key actions related to legislative affairs and media events. Given his primary duties of coordinating actions worked by the Army Staff and the Secretariat, he is in the information loop and can serve as principal integrator. Another concern is whether the Director has the background in public relations and legislative affairs to effectively serve as the single integrator.

Beyond such organizational matters, it is apparent that most Army officers do not possess the background to effectively operate in the legislative affairs and public relations arena. Although the Director has usually commanded a division, we cannot assume that he will be effective as an integrator – even though he may be otherwise comfortable as Director. No professional military education prepares an individual for such duty. On-the-job is not the preferred training for such a critical position.

TRAINING SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS

Developing an effective message is the first step in improving the Army's relations on Capitol Hill. The next step of preparing senior Army leaders to convey that message is equally

important. Historically, Army Staff principals have received low marks on their ability to build relationships and generate support for Army programs with Congress. A study conducted by four Harvard Kennedy School of Government Fellows indicated that the typical senior Army military leader felt that any requirement to interface with Congressional members and staffers was viewed as more of a burden than an opportunity.³⁷

Typical Army Lieutenant General and Major Generals are uncomfortable talking to Congressional staffers or members concerning Army resource requirements. Upon receiving an information request from a Congressional staffer or member of Congress, their first response is that the requester is seeking a way to interfere with Army programs that they are opposed to or they are looking to harvest funds for other programs.³⁸ Obviously, such adverse things have happened. But in most cases the individual requesting the information is attempting to better understand Army requirements. If we do not explain our requirements sufficiently, we put critical programs at risk, as earlier exemplified with the international headquarters funding.

The current Chief of Staff attempted to reduce this problem by assigning selected general officers to attend a one-week, Army Strategic Leader Course that focuses on change in the Army. A portion of the course highlights the Congressional role in resourcing the Army and the role of senior military leaders in articulating the Army's needs to Congress. Established in 2000, the course has graduated approximately 298 one; two; and three-star generals. While the program focuses future senior leaders on change and how to effectively manage change in organizations, it continuously identifies key external stakeholders, including those in Congress. Normally during the one-week course a member of Congress or Congressional staffer discusses the role of Congress and its impact on Army programs. The course attempts to update training for these senior leaders after their initial attendance in the course by bringing them in for a shortened two-day course within two years of their initial training.³⁹ While the course stresses the importance of Congress as the Army's resource provider, a one-week course cannot significantly change an officer's outlook shaped by over 20 years of exposure to the Army's culture.

It is apparent that the individual filling the role of the principal integrator of the Army's internal and external message probably does not receive sufficient training through professional military education. An effective integrator should be comfortable in public relations or legislative affairs, if not both. Most Army general officers do not gain expertise in either role in their normal career progression. In fact, statistics show that officers who pursue interests in these areas do not reach the general officer ranks.⁴⁰

Given the skills required of the principal integrator of the Army's message, there is an obvious need for a civilian appointee to fill the position. Since the individual should have direct oversight of the legislative liaison and public relations effort, the individual should have the minimum civilian rank of an Assistant Secretary. This ranking provides the individual with sufficient clout to talk to the big four (Secretary of the Army, Chief of Staff, Under Secretary of the Army and the Vice Chief of Staff) on a regular basis, the power to direct action from Army Staff and Secretariat principals and also a level of expertise to operate comfortably inside the beltway and on Capitol Hill.

In light of the current Secretary of Defense's comments on restricting the services legislative liaison functions, we must consider whether such an aggressive action as creating an Assistant Secretary of the Army for Strategic Communications is politically appropriate at this time. Unfortunately, Congress prefers to communicate directly with the Services on specific programs, since the subject matter experts reside within the services. Even if Secretary Rumsfeld is successful in reigning in the formal legislative liaison structures of the services, information requirements from Congress will quickly lead to ad hoc efforts to meet Congress's voracious appetite for information.

The Army was recently directed by the Secretary of Defense to reduce its legislative liaison positions by 15 percent.⁴¹ While carrying out this directive, the Army must ensure that it remains effective in getting its message out on the Hill. The future of Army Transformation rests directly on the Army's ability to articulate a clear message to its Congressional stakeholders that the path to transformation will not make key congressional constituents "have nots".

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Army needs a formal structure to integrate internal and external messages. A position at that Assistant Secretary of the Army level to fulfill this requirement will provide enough horse power to ensure civilian appointees in the Secretariat and the military Army Staff principals get "on message" early. This position must have sufficient clout to ensure senior leaders maintain an active commitment to conveying the Army's message effectively.

The new position should be designated Assistant Secretary of the Army for Strategic Communications. Both the Chief of Public Affairs and the Chief of Legislative Liaison should report directly to this Assistant Secretary. This individual will function similar to Boeing's Executive Vice President for the Washington office. Serving as an Assistant Secretary will give the individual sufficient power to formalize the Army's strategic communications function.

Linking Congressional and media interests daily through supervision PA and OCLL ensure that the Army remains on message with all its stakeholders.

For practical purposes, the integrator of the Army's message must be a civilian with sufficient background in media relations and government affairs to effectively communicate the Army's story on a daily basis. The career path of the Army officer does not provide the depth and range of experience needed to effectively communicate the Army's message internally and externally to Congress and the media.

While the Army offers a career field to develop public affairs professionals, no such path exists for legislative affairs professionals. Previous studies have recommended developing a group of officers versed in the skills required for congressional liaison duty. But given the limited career opportunities to expose an officer to this area and the limited amount of time in an officer's career development, the prospects of developing a legislative liaison career field appear limited.

The Army's need for a single integrator of internal and external messages is more critical today than ever. Since the Army has not successfully defended its position on many issues in the press or with Congress, as in the black beret debacle, the Army cannot afford to take risks in getting out a clear message on its path to transformation.

WORD COUNT = 6,069

ENDNOTES

¹The Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section 8.

²Noreen Holthaus, Bruce Kramme, and Mark Kulungowski, A Clash of Perspectives: Overcoming the Army Impasse – The Relationship between the Army and Congress, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: US Army War College Paper, 1999), 2.

³Gayle Adcock et al., Working with Congress: Improving the Military-Congressional Relationship, National Security Program Discussion Paper Series 89-06. (Cambridge: John F. Kennedy School of Government, 1989), 67.

⁴Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison (OCLL) Homepage; available from <http://www.hqda.army.mil/ocll/>; Internet; accessed 14 December 2002.

⁵Ibid.

⁶MG Joseph Taylor, "CLL Briefing" briefing slides, Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, available from http://www.hqda.army.mil/ocll/CLL_Briefing/7-18-02%20MG%20Taylor_files/frame.htm; Internet; accessed 2 December 2002.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Holthaus, 16-17.

⁹Mary Ellen Fraser, Professional Staff Member, House Armed Service Committee, US House of Representatives, telephone interview by author, 5 February 2003...

¹⁰Holthaus, 2-3.

¹¹Adcock, 66-67.

¹²Taylor.

¹³Carl H. Builder, "The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. p. 20.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵OCLL.

¹⁶"Congressional Budget Liaison", ASA(FM-BUL) Homepage, available at <http://www.asafm.army.mil/secretariat/org/of/abo/bul.asp>; Internet; accessed 14 December 2002.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸COL Paul Raggio, chief programs division, Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, US Army, telephone interview by author, 3 February 2003.

¹⁹Adcock, 62.

²⁰Taylor.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³"Depot Caucus Protects Jobs in Home States," The Holland Sentinel Online, August 18, 1999; available from http://www.thehollandsentinel.net/stories/081899/new_caucus.html; Internet; accessed 10 December 2002.

²⁴Ibid. 16-17.

²⁵Scroggs, Stephen K. *Army Relations with Congress: Thick Armor, Dull Sword, Slow Horse*, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000. pp. 99-101.

²⁶Goodman, Michael B. *Corporate Communications for Executives*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998. 1.

²⁷Ibid., 2-3.

²⁸Ibid., 13-14.

²⁹John J. Hampton, Ed. AMA Management Handbook (New York, NY: AMACOM, 1994), 11-3.

³⁰Ibid., 11-4.

³¹Michael N. Matton, Vice President Legislative Affairs Boeing Corporation, interview by author, 22 November 2002.

³²Karen Lowe, Government Marketing Representative TRW Corporation, telephone interview by author, 25 November 2002.

³³Office of the Chief of Public Affairs (OCPA) Homepage, available from <http://www.dtic.mil/armylink/>; Internet; accessed 14 December 2002.

³⁴Raggio.

³⁵LTC Mark H. Wiggins, Office of Strategic Communications, Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, telephone interview by author, 13 December 2002..

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Holthaus, 19.

³⁸Scroggs, 60..

³⁹Michael Alvis, "The Army Strategic Leadership Program", briefing slides MPRI 6 February 2003.

⁴⁰Scroggs, p. 218.

⁴¹LTC Michael Delaney, Programs Division, Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison, US Army, telephone interview by author, 2 February 2003

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